

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Ms. Lynn E. Cargill on October 23, 2009.

The claims have been amended as follows:

Claims 1. – 12. (canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A plastic forming apparatus for making plastics from at least two different particulate plastic materials, comprising:

at least two complementary open bare surface molds, each mold being mounted on a rolling cart, where said molds are capable of being moved along a trunion track and capable of being heated;

said molds having at least one open bare surface with a sealing edge for ultimately mating with the other open mold, said open bare surface being disposed for receiving the particulate plastic materials;

at least one hopper for dumping a first particulate plastic into each of the open molds individually, said hopper having at least one distributor arm with a downwardly facing distributor tube including louvers for opening and closing the louvers to distribute the particulate material into each of the individual open molds, said hopper being capable of being recharged with surplus particulate plastic material after the molds are used;

a supply of heat for separately heating the complementary molds;

a second hopper for dumping a second particulate plastic into at least one of the molds, said second hopper also having a distributor arm with a downwardly facing distributor tube including louvers for selectively opening and closing the louvers to distribute the particulate

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material into the at least one mold, said hopper being capable of being recharged with surplus particulate plastic material after the molds are used;

a means for rotating the molds to remove excess particulate plastic material
and a means for bringing the two open molds together to form a cavity therebetween,

a cooling station for cooling the heated molds; ~~and~~

a track for rolling the two carts from under the first hopper to a position
under the second hopper and then into the cooling station; and

a means for moving the closed cavity molds into said cooling station.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the at least two complementary open molds are made of aluminum and further comprise heating plenums attached to the back of the molds to heat the molds.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the heating plenums include a propane fired heating unit capable of being tipped over after the particulate material has melted onto the mold, in order to discharge any remaining unmelted particulate plastic.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the at least two complementary open molds are designed to be held apart at a predetermined distance to allow for a resulting article having a sandwich configuration with a foamed center.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the molds rotate on a horizontal axis on the rolling cart, such that after the desired melted skin has been formed on the mold, the mold can be tipped over to discharge excess plastic before the next step.

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising dump trays under each of the hoppers for receiving the discharge excess plastic.

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19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising a vacuum mechanism for transferring the excess particulate plastic contained in the dump trays back up into the hopper for further distribution into subsequent molds.

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising water spraying nozzles in the cooling station for cooling the molds after the desired article has been formed.

Claims 21.-23. (Canceled)

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 13-20 are allowed over the prior art of record.
3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Fried et al (6,589,470) discloses an apparatus for forming molded articles from particulate thermoplastic material, comprising two complementary molds (20, 40), wherein the first mold (40) is mounted on a roller cart (52) and capable of moving along a trunion track (56), wherein the mold (20) has an open surface with a sealing edge (48) for mating with the other open mold (40), a heating station (Fig. 6, 110), a cooling station (Fig. 3) for cooling the heated mold.

However, Fried et al fail to disclose means for rotating the molds to remove excess particulate plastic material and a means for bringing the two open molds together to form a cavity therebetween, a track for rolling the two carts from under the first hopper to a position under the second hopper and a means for moving the closed cavity molds into said cooling station.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

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fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to THU KHANH T. NGUYEN whose telephone number is (571) 272-1136. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30am-4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Yogendra Gupta can be reached on 571-272-1316. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Yogendra N Gupta/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1791

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